How do the top 40 business schools in the UK understand, teach and implement KM in their teaching?

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Abstract:

Purpose The emergence of 'knowledge economies' brings along new lenses to organizational management and behaviour. One of the key concepts at the heart of this new wave is knowledge management (KM). This paper attempts to scrutinize how KM is taught and discussed within the context of Business Schools around the UK.
Design/methodology/approach The general research question is: How do Top 40 Business Schools in the UK understand, teach and implement KM in their teaching? To answer this question, we reviewed the curriculums of leading schools and contacted all schools to collect more information and data.
Findings The study reveals that KM has yet to carve a self-standing place for itself within taught programmes in UK business schools.
Research limitations/implications The study's methodological design can explore the relevance of KM as a term, but it can only provide limited perspective into how this complex and multidimensional concept is operationalized in business schools' curriculums. Moreover the capacity of business schools to frame KM holistically is beyond the scope of this research.
Practical implications Framing KM discourse within relevant academic literature, this paper outlines that, while KM is being scrutinized as a research topic, interest in KM has yet to be translated into a widespread integration of KM as a taught skill within business Schools.
Originality/value The study is considered one of the first attempts to investigate how KM is understood, taught and implemented in teaching and curriculum design within the UK business schools.

INTRODUCTION

"While there is a wealth of published and informal literature, thought derived from practice and dialogue on these topics, a consensus on what constitutes the core elements of knowledge management competencies and knowledge management education is lacking."

A statement made on the occasion of the 2011 *Knowledge Management Education Forum* (KMEF), which brought together 75 educators at George Washington University in Washington, DC (Cited in (Singh 2012).

Knowledge and Knowledge Management (KM) have attracted immense attention in academia, with great interest seen in economics, management, information technology, anthropology, sociology, epistemology, psychology, and other disciplines (Quintas *et al*., 1997). A "crystal-clear" understanding of what is meant by knowledge is required to fulfil the intent of KM, which is to manage knowledge practically and effectively to reach broad operational strategic objectives (Wiig, 2000). However, this has proved to be difficult (Purvis *et al*., 2001), and there is a plethora of attempts at defining the term.

Polanyi's (1966) significant work marked the origin of the concept of tacit knowledge - a knowledge that tends to be personal, obscure and difficult to transmit (or sometimes even to recognize). Polanyi described psychological experimentation based on the famous learning process of classical conditioning (Pavlov, 1927) to demonstrate what was meant by the notion that "we know more than we can tell" (p. 4).

Making appropriate tacit knowledge explicit and portable is a key component of KM (Swan, 2001); this is an emerging multidisciplinary field that has many facets based on theories, metaphors, and approaches from several disciplines (Roknuzzaman and Umemoto, 2013). Thus, although KM is perhaps predominantly originated from the significant work in epistemology by the early fathers of western philosophy (Sutton, 2007), its intellectual roots also include Religion, Economics, Business Theory to understand work and its organization, Rationalization of Work (Taylorism), Total Quality Management, Artificial Intelligence, and Learning Organization (Wiig, 2000).

For Jashapara (2004), KM is: ‘the effective learning processes associated with exploration, exploitation and sharing of human knowledge (tacit and explicit) that uses appropriate technology and cultural environments to enhance an organization’s intellectual capital and performance’. This definition stresses that KM is a multidimensional process, which utilizes ICTs, influences organizational learning, and has implications for strategic development and organizational change. Several notable scholars have long argued that the long-term prosperity of many organizations depends on the organizational effort to explicitly manage the knowledge of their employees and use it as a source for growth and corporate profit (Haslinda and Sarinah, 2009; Herschel and Nemati, 2000; Herschel *et al*., 2001). Skyrme and Amidon (1998) argue that KM has become a core competence that companies must develop in order to succeed in tomorrow’s dynamic global economy. Additionally, the information and knowledge professions have become an important facet of the modern economy (Thompson *et al*., 2008), and every sector from manufacturing and services to public administration has engaged in KM initiatives (Heisig, 2015).

The concept of a knowledge-based economy (KE) is used to describe an economy that creates, disseminates and uses knowledge to enhance its growth and development. A knowledge-based economy revolves around investment in research and development (R&D) and in innovation as the basis for the capacity building necessary for knowledge absorption and information dissemination. Universities should adopt programmes that upgrade skill levels of workers – in turn, enhancing the economy’s ability to distribute and share knowledge.

According to the World Bank’s Knowledge Economy Index (KEI), the picture across most countries varies from economies with impressive progress towards knowledge-based economies and building capacity for knowledge creation such as Sweden (KEI=9.43), which leads the world index, to economies with a large decrease in their KEI, such as Myanmar (KEI=0.96). The UK

ranks number 14 after several European and OCED countries such as Finland, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Canada, Germany, Australia, Switzerland, Ireland and the United States. Using the World Bank's Knowledge Assessment Methodology (KAM) (www.worldbank.org/kam), the recent performance of all countries (146) is illustrated in Table 1. These indexes reflect the readiness of world economies to take advantage of the new economy and speed up the process of economic transformation.

Table 1: World Knowledge Economy Index (KEI) and Knowledge Indexes (KI) 2012

Rank	Change	Country	KEI	KI
1	0	Sweden	9.43	9.38
2	6	Finland	9.33	9.22
3	0	Denmark	9.16	9.00
4	-2	Netherlands	9.11	9.22
5	2	Norway	9.11	8.99
6	3	New Zealand	8.97	8.93
7	3	Canada	8.92	8.72
8	7	Germany	8.9	8.83
9	-3	Australia	8.88	8.98
10	-5	Switzerland	8.87	8.65
145	-16	Myanmar	0.96	1.22
Regions				
1	0	North America	8.8	8.7
2	0	Europe and Central Asia	7.47	7.64
3	1	East Asia and the Pacific	5.32	5.17
4	1	Latin America	5.15	5.31
5	-2	World	5.12	5.01
6	0	Middle East and N. Africa	4.74	4.51
7	1	South Asia	2.84	2.77
8	-1	Africa	2.55	2.43
Income Groups				
1	0	High Income	8.6	8.67
2	0	Upper Middle Income	5.1	5.07
3	0	Lower Middle Income	3.42	3.45
4	0	Low Income	1.58	1.58

Source: World Bank (2012)

The emergence of 'knowledge economies' brings along new lenses to organizational management and behaviour. One of the key concepts at the heart of this new wave is KM: *the ability of companies to 'know what they know' is identified as an increasingly crucial success factor for both public and private sectors.* As organizations begin to look carefully at developing effective knowledge management frameworks, it is only sensible to think that young professionals should be prepared to deal with complex KM systems. **Business schools are among the most poised to teach students how to manage and develop increasingly sophisticated KM strategies. But do they?**

This study will critically review how UK business schools, particularly the top 40 in the UK[1], understand KM and integrate it within their teaching. The study will highlight some of the gaps between the rhetoric around the importance of KM, and how business schools groom students to contribute to the *knowledge economy.* The general research question that will be answered is: **How do business schools in the UK, particularly the top 40, understand, teach and implement KM in their teaching?** To answer this question, we reviewed the curriculums of leading UK business schools (101), with more detailed analysis and attention given to the top 40 business schools, analysing how KM is integrated within the business school's curriculums and teaching plans. Moreover, we reviewed websites of all business schools, and contacted all business schools and admissions offices within universities with recognised business schools via email and telephone to further collect more information and data about the understanding and teaching of KM within business schools in the UK.

The paper is structured as follows: The next section (2) will illustrate the methodology utilized in this study; Section 3 will frame the study within relevant KM literature; Section 4 will include the main findings of the study, discussing how KM is integrated within business schools and

showcasing key examples of best practices in KM teaching among the surveyed universities; Section 5 will discuss key recommendations to make KM more explicitly part of business schools' curriculums; and Sections 6 and 7 will draw conclusions and state limitations of the study.

METHODOLOGY

This study was set to answer the following main research question:

How do the top 40 business schools in the UK understand and implement KM in their teaching?

To answer this question, data was collected from various sources:

- First we checked the data provided by the Association of Business Schools (now Chartered Association of Business Schools) which CABS obtained from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)[2] dated 2012-2013 for subject categorization at a lower level that HESA provides through the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS)[3]. According to CABS4 the JACS codes is the only way to find subject titles such as Knowledge Management. From searching the JACS data, CABS confirmed that there were only 2 universities in the UK that offer courses with "Knowledge Management" in the title of courses in 2013 academic year and there might be many more that offer such a course in 2014/2015. In addition, some business schools might teach knowledge management as a subset of a broader field such as Organisational Studies or part of Information systems?

- Secondly we first reviewed the websites of leading UK business schools (101), with more detailed analysis and attention placed on the top 40 business schools according to

Eduniversal's Business Schools Ranking in the United Kingdom (Eduuniversal 2014). In searching each business school's website, the following specific research questions are considered:

- Does the business school offer a complete pathway in KM? We search both postgraduate and undergraduate offerings by the school relating to KM, and related subjects such as information systems, information technology, etc.
- Does the business school offer a major in KM and what credits are given for this? These details are gathered from specific courses/modules published online; however it is important to note these details are not available in full on all business schools' websites.
- Does the business school offer a minor in KM and what credits are given for this? The same details as the above question.
- Do they integrate a specific KM course in their degree programmes, if yes how? Here we investigated the programme information/details published online.
- Is at least one course in KM required for graduation? The information published online on most business schools' websites indicates clearly which courses are core or elective; we can therefore decide if the course/module is essential in order to achieve the required completion requirements of the programme.
- Beyond the business school, do other schools in the university offer KM? To answer this question, we searched websites using keywords such as KM, IS, etc., across the university to see if there any KM related programme is designed and offered by another school/faculty in the university apart from the business school.

Table 2: KM in Business Schools Score Chart

	KM Path	Major in KM	Minor in KM	Specific Course	1 course required?	Taught in other school?	Total	Notes:
Business School 1								
Business School 2								

Source: Field Research Work

Moreover, we contacted all business school and admission offices within universities with recognised business schools via email and telephone to further collect more information and data about the understanding and teaching of KM within business schools in the UK.

The study focused on enquiring how each school includes KM teaching in its programmes and curriculums by analysing how KM is integrated within the business school's curriculums and teaching plans.

Based on the above indicators (as indicated in the above table), each business school from the top 40 business schools was allocated a score ranging from 0 to 5, with a 0 score given to the business school that has no focus on KM in its teaching, and a 5 score for the business school that is actively integrating KM in their teaching.

The study also analyses the discourse each business school has implemented around KM, as portrayed within their websites. The review took account of whether the school published research on KM and whether they have a centre or department dedicated to KM. Beyond the review of each individual website, the search was triangulated utilizing search engines to scope out which business school identified KM as an important key term.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As mentioned earlier in the paper, the role of knowledge in organizations has attracted increased interest in academia over the last two decades, with numerous journals dedicating special issues to knowledge in organizations, and 25 peer reviewed journals emerging under the label KM (Heisig, 2015). There is a large amount of literature about knowledge with different views and opinions (Alavi and Leidner, 2001; Holsapple and Joshi, 2002; Joshi *et al*., 2007; Kettinger and Li, 2010; McQueen, 1998; Nonaka, 1994, 1998; Zack, 1999a, 1999b, etc.).

The term KM enters business jargon in the early 1990s (Hansen, Nohria et al. 1999)). However, despite being reminiscent of very early ideas, the term "KM" was not coined until the 1980s, after the industrial revolution changed the economic landscape in the 17th century (Wiig, 2000). Since then it was understood that the 'knowledge' within a company has always been informally 'managed'. However, the increased attention to improving such processes emerged out of a transformation in companies' processes within modern knowledge-based economies. Consultancies, whose added value is precisely knowledge, were ahead of the curve in implementing KM systems (Birkinshaw 2001).

The field of KM has attracted contributions from a wide range of disciplines that seek to provide answers to the challenges of the accelerating pace of innovation in products, services and processes; the growing importance of work that requires extensive education, experience and judgement; and the escalating complexity of knowledge, which becomes increasingly distributed and changeable, among others (Saito, 2007). As companies experienced a shift between utilizing natural resources to valuing intellectual assets as crucial to their success and processes, KM became an increasingly relevant management dimension (Hansen *et al*., 1999).

KM, however, is a loaded term, which overlaps with different management concepts. (Becerra-Fernandez and Sabherwal 2014) paint a complex picture to explain the nature of KM. They point out that discussion around KM has traditionally fallen within two main approaches: one oriented towards information systems and one more concerned with the human resource dimension of KM. The two approaches put emphasis on where knowledge resides: *one stressing technology, the other focusing on people*. This tension was reflected in an article published in 1999 in the *Stanford Review*, arguing that there are two main strategies for managing knowledge: *codification or personalization* (Hansen *et al*., 1999). In the last decade, new information technologies have mushroomed at high speed. Meanwhile, it is becoming increasingly clear that a successful KM strategy needs to integrate at least a human resources perspective, an information system perspective, and must be aligned with strategy (Becerra-Fernandez and Sabherwal 2014). (Jashapara 2004) defines KM as:

> *"the effective learning processes associated with exploration, exploitation and sharing of human knowledge (tacit and explicit) that uses appropriate technology and cultural environments to enhance an organization's intellectual capital and performance"*.

This definition stresses that KM is a multidimensional process, which utilizes ICTs, influences organizational learning, and has implications for strategic development and organizational change. As Birkinshaw (2001) puts it, KM is so hard to do because knowledge is already being managed; to manage it differently, new tools need to be developed, and old modus operandi need to be undone. In short, KM is not only about tools; its practice involves deeper organizational cultural changes and changes in people's behaviours.

However, from a management perspective, Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) argue that the key difference between information and knowledge is that information is much more easily identified, organized and distributed. Knowledge, on the other hand, cannot really be managed because it resides in one's mind. Whilst there are various typologies, in its simplest form there are two main types of knowledge – tacit and explicit. Explicit knowledge may be expressed and communicated relatively easily; tacit knowledge tends to be personal, subjective and difficult to transmit (or sometimes even to recognize). Thus, while some explicit knowledge may lend itself to codification and commodification in Knowledge Management Systems (KMS), tacit knowledge is very strongly embedded in the mind of the individual and highly context-sensitive (Barnes, 2002). Alavi and Leidner (2001) define KMS as a class of information system applied to managing organizational knowledge. A key challenge of KMS, therefore, has been to make appropriate tacit knowledge explicit and portable (Swan, 2001).

Three years ago (25-27 April 2012, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada), the researcher participated in a landmark, invitation-only conference in Canada, organized by Louise Shaxson[4] and Alex Bielak[5] under the aegis of the United Nations University. The conference was an excellent opportunity to meet and discuss various issues relating to KM with scholars and practitioners from across the world. Delegates at the conference discussed their understanding of KM together with other, more familiar terms such as Knowledge Translation, Knowledge Exchange, Knowledge Intermediation, Knowledge Brokering, Knowledge Mobilization, and others. However, one of the many outcomes from the conference, which has been recently developed by Shaxson, Bielak and others, is the K* (KStar) Concept Paper, in which Shaxson *et al*. (2012), argue that:

> *"KM (is) the process of ensuring that knowledge is available. It is sometimes used to describe the suite of activities from the storage of information through to its dissemination.*

> *However, with the emergence of other terms and greater differentiation between roles, it is beginning to refer more to the collection and storage of different types of knowledge so that they can be accessed when needed."*

As such KM is a systemically related and critical element of the K* Spectrum (Figure 1). It provides the solid informational foundations to facilitate efficient relational and systems functions, including knowledge and innovation brokering. Investing in such functions can lead to operational efficiencies and smoother, faster delivery and accelerated impact of various initiatives. However, as previously observed by Shaxson and Bielak, while many different organizations are looking at aspects of K* and placing increasing emphasis on knowledge management and other K* activities, they are doing so in very different ways with diverse approaches, budgets and motivations.

Figure 1: The K* spectrum - there is a spectrum of knowledge sharing activities, which are all systemically related to each other

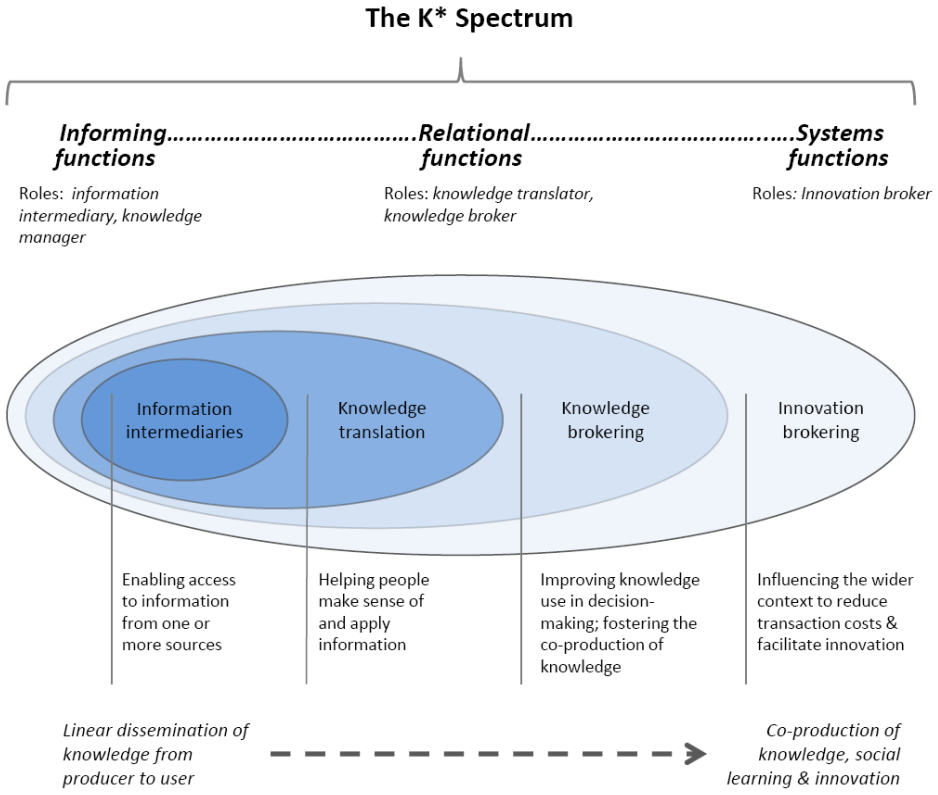


Figure 2.1: The K* spectrum - there is a spectrum of knowledge sharing activities, which are all systemically related to each other. (Reproduced with permission of the authors from Shaxson and Bielak *et al*., 2012. for a publication in submission by Shaxson and Bielak *et al*.)

KM models and frameworks

In their famous ground paper entitled *Perspectives on knowledge management models*, Cristea and Capatina (2009) analysed three key models and frameworks for KM, namely von Krogh and Roos, Nonaka/Takeuchi, Wiig, Boisot and Bennet. In their comprehensive analysis of these KM models, Cristea and Capatina describe the most important characteristics of each model, the main factors involved in the model, and the different types of knowledge and elements forming the model. Furthermore, they provide comments about the advantages and disadvantages of these models as well as their usefulness in the economic environment.

In another similar famous review of KM models, Haslinda and Sarinah (2009) critically review the various KM models: Boisot; Hedlund and Nonaka; Skandia Intellectual Capital; Demerest; Frid; Kogut and Zander; as well as Stankosky and Baldanza's KM Framework. The review reveals that the various KM models reviewed vary in perspectives ranging from the basic assumption of the articulation and transfer of tacit and explicit knowledge, to the more complex and complicated assumption that knowledge is intellectual capital and is mechanistic in perspective, as well as an important asset that has to be managed efficiently for a firm's success. Haslinda and Sarinah argue that these models have their own way of placing the major KM activities and enablers, with the aim of producing a dynamic system to reinforce the organization's core competencies. Moreover, KM processes are the action steps the organization uses to identify its needs and the manner in which it collects, adapts and transfers that information across the organization. Through the KM process, the models can be used to foster the development of organizational knowledge, and enhance the organizational impact of individuals throughout the organizations.

Yang *et al*. (2009) critically evaluate selected KM models and propose an holistic KM model. The authors argue that most existing KM models tend to narrowly define knowledge from conceptual and perceptual perspectives and fail to recognize affectual knowledge such as values and visions. They also argue that most KM models view KM as a linear or cyclical process and thus fail to identify the multidimensional nature of the knowledge dynamics between individuals and organizations.

The Peter Heisig (2009) article "Harmonisation of knowledge management - comparing 160 KM frameworks around the globe", is claimed to be the first quantitative and qualitative analysis of 160 KM frameworks from different origins worldwide. In his study that aims to discover the differences and correspondences of KM frameworks, Heisig analysed the elements of 160 KM frameworks from

research and practice collected worldwide. However, despite the wide range of terms used in the KM frameworks, the Heisig study reveals that an underlying consensus was detected regarding the basic categories used to describe the KM activities and critical success factors. Moreover, similar to other scholars mentioned above, Heisig noted that there is still a need to develop an improved understanding in research and practice with regard to the core term knowledge.

Table 3 below includes the major KM models and frameworks analysed and discussed by key studies and research, with a common description of these models and frameworks.

Table 3: Analysis of KM Models and Frameworks

KM Models/Frameworks	Description
Krogh and Roos	Based on an epistemological approach that knowledge is found both in the individual mind and in the relationship between people.
Nonaka-Takeuchi	The central argument of the model is the transformation of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge (knowledge spiral) as the essential base for learning and innovation at individual, group and organizational levels.
Hedlund and Nonaka	KM has been seen from the categorical view in which knowledge is categorized into discrete elements to the more complicated, and the complex perspective of knowledge that is mechanistic and socially constructed orientation.
Wiig	In order to ensure perspectives and purposes, Wiig's main claim is that knowledge can only be useful when it is organized using semantic networks.
Choo	Analyse how informational elements are found in organizational actions.
Skandia Intellectual Capital	Assume that intellectual capital is a vital asset in organization and should be managed efficiently for firm's success.
Demerest	Intrinsically linked with the social and learning process within organizations.
Frid	Suggests that knowledge should be managed systematically and of equal emphasis at all KM process levels.
Stankosky and Baldanza	Emphasizes that leadership, organization structure, technology infrastructure and learning are important foundations for KM in an organization.
Kogut and Zander	Focus on the strategic importance of knowledge as a source of competitive advantage.
Adaptive models	Very well suited for modelling KM processes by treating the organization as a living organism concerned with an independent existence, and which is concerned with its surviving at almost any moment.

Source: Researcher Critical Literature Analysis

In concluding this part of the paper, it is evident from the literature review that knowledge is intangible and that is why many organizations find it difficult to see a clear business outcome from any KM processes and activities. Despite the importance of KM for various organizations, organizations' senior executives continuously ask for justification for any investment in KM initiatives within the organization. The various models reviewed are found to have various KM processes fostering the development of organizational knowledge, but offered very little with

regard to how KM can be integrated with the organization and consequently achieve excellence. Also most of the models reviewed fail to provide an holistic view to develop a fit-for-purpose integrated KM framework for organizational excellence.

MAKING THE CASE FOR TEACHING KM IN BUSINESS SCHOOLS

"…our mission is to establish the UK as a leading knowledge economy… our objective in policy must be to create a successful, knowledge-based economy which rests on innovation and a highly skilled labour force. That is what my own job is about."

A speech entitled "Innovation and the UK's knowledge economy" by Dr Vince Cable, the former UK Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, 22 July 2014, London, UK

In today's economy, KM and organizational learning play fundamental roles in the successful evolution of public and private sector organizations. Thus, although based on concepts rooted in old ideas, KM can be considered a critical new profession in a 21st century knowledge society and knowledge economy (Bedford, 2013a). Companies operate increasingly within 'knowledge economies', where production and services are based on knowledge-intensive activities (Powell and Snellman, 2004). In this changing economic environment, the management of different forms of knowledge can be among a company's most powerful tools for innovation and competitiveness. Indeed, the information and skills acquired through experience or education are key engines for workers' performance (Powell and Snellman 2004).

In light of these considerations, to work effectively companies face the need to help people work together, maximize their resources, and make knowledge easily available across different institutional layers (Birkinshaw 2001). KM thus becomes a tool to help organizations

conceptualize frameworks and utilize technology and team management skills, in order to make information readily accessible. This should reflect a deep understanding of organizational needs.

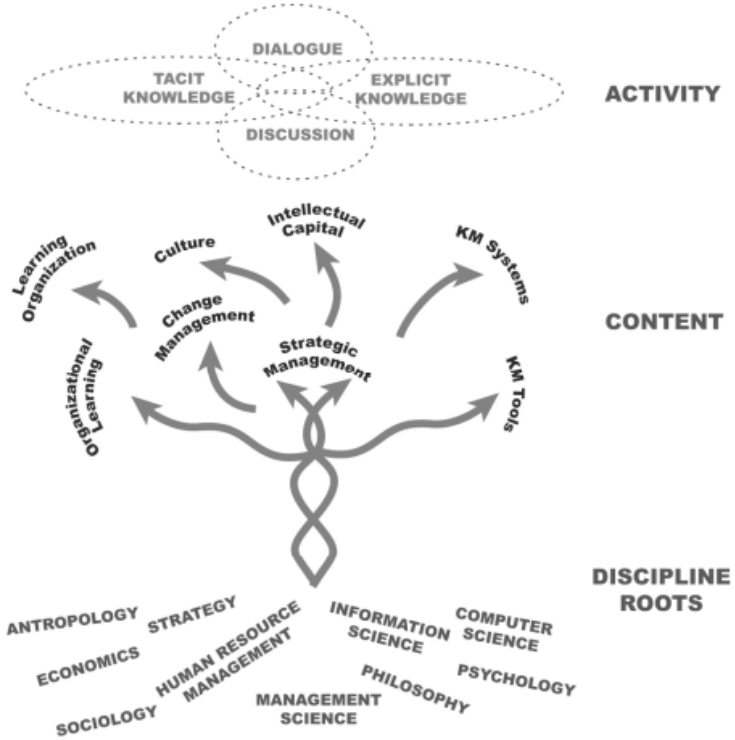
Business schools, as learning hubs for future business leaders, should aim to prepare students to deal with the complexity of managing information in a contemporary knowledge-based economy. With rapidly evolving technology and the need for organizations to maintain competitiveness, business schools could provide a platform for best practices in KM to be taught, developed and tested. However, there appears to be a gap between the current practice and KM in academia (Singh, 2012), and particularly with respect to business schools. It is predicted that if the pace of the diffusion of industry practice does not quicken, companies will do all of the teaching in their own schools, with little assistance from Universities (Ruth *et al*., 1999). This disparity seems particularly illogical when considering the evidence to suggest that there is an overt call for business graduates who have studied KM (Thompson *et al*., 2008). Also, consider the fact that business students are expected to be leaders of the industrial community (Jabbour, 2010), and the more academic programmes that are available, the more educated professionals we have to offer (Bedford, 2013b).

Challenges for teaching KM and curriculum design

In a 2012 article published in the *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Singh argues that KM is practiced in the real word, but has not yet found its way in a consolidated way as a university discipline (Singh, 2012). There is a gap between the importance of KM to management, and KM education. In Singh's words, "*the formal teaching process at colleges and universities generally lag many years behind the active usage and leveraging of these practices in the real world*".

According to Becerra-Fernandez and Sabherwal (2014), KM is rooted in a range of disciplines ranging from anthropology to computer science. Figure 2, shows the 'tree of KM', which illustrates how the content of KM's processes need be aligned with a strong strategic management vision, and branch out to include a range of management areas including organizational culture, intellectual capital, KM systems and organizational learning.

Figure 2: The Tree of Knowledge Management



Source: (Becerra-Fernandez and Sabherwal 2014)

With the need to keep such complex processes in mind, it comes to no surprise that KM is extremely difficult to pin down in its everyday implementation. This is given by the fact that a large part of the knowledge is shared and held in informal and imperceptible ways. This 'tacit

knowledge' also needs to be leveraged for a company to work effectively and competitively (Becerra-Fernandez and Sabherwal 2014). In this sense, dialogue and discussions complement formal KM systems. This complexity has obvious implications on the teaching of KM. *How should KM be integrated within formal business education?*

According to Singh's (2012) review of KM teaching, and in line with our earlier discussion, it is hard to peg KM to any particular discipline, and KM practice seems to be just like a black box whose internal workings are not clearly understood. Secondly, despite the strong rhetoric in support of the importance of KM, there has been little empirical evidence that KM is linked to competitiveness (Singh, 2012). Finally, KM is widely understood within the literature as a multidimensional concept (Birkinshaw 2001). For this reason, when only one aspect of KM is prioritized, this can be detrimental to well-thought out and balanced KM systems. Moreover, Singh's review suggests that business schools need to catch up with industry practices of KM quickly. Otherwise, he argues, companies will invest in undertaking internal training, alienating the relevance of business schools. Indeed, companies have already started to teach KM internally; Singh (2012) discusses case studies from leading firms such as General Motors and Motorola (citing Ruth *et al*., 2003).

Furthermore, as well as a need for business schools to produce business students that have the knowledge and skills to successfully immerse themselves into the organizations they are employed by, there is also evidence that business students actually have the ability to positively influence the running of the organizations themselves. For example, Tho and Trang (2015) investigated the transfer of knowledge from business schools to business organizations through the in-service training of students by employing the ability-motivation-opportunity model (AMO) (Blumberg and Pringle, 1982; Waldman and Spangler, 1989), which posits that the interaction of ability,

motivation and opportunity are determinants of job performance. The authors propose a theoretical model, in which students' intrinsic motivation for knowledge transfer, knowledge acquired from business schools, and the innovative culture of business organizations are the three main factors that affect the transfer of knowledge from business schools to business organizations through the in-service training of students. This theoretical model demonstrates the importance of the role of business schools on the economy, as the in-service training of students is the agent for the knowledge transfer process. This suggests that the students that business schools produce can have an impact on the organizations at which they are employed. Thus, rather fittingly, Leonard-Barton (1995) suggests that the expertise of a firm is embodied in machines, but acquired by employees.

Pfeffer and Fong (2002) suggest that the system is self-reinforcing and difficult to change, in spite of the evidence of the efficacy of KM. Several barriers, and the reasons for such barriers, to fundamentally altering MBA programmes are discussed: first and foremost is cost. The second barrier is that few, if any, current business school faculty are particularly well equipped to staff new models of business education that link education to practice; this is because many faculty have not practiced the profession or craft of management. Thirdly, it is scarcely in the interests of those schools winning the competitive war for status to change the rules of the game that have put them on top – thus, unsurprisingly, much of the innovation in business education and in MBA programmes comes from either new schools or programmes that are not so much in the mainstream. Finally, Pfeffer and Fong (2002) suggest that the institutionalization of business education, which is often taken for granted, maintains the status quo. This institutionalization of existing practices legitimises them and insulates them from competition, change and questioning. There is a mutual reinforcement between accrediting organizations (such as the AACSB) and the various disciplinary professional associations that constitute the institutional field of business

education to maintain the *status quo*. Furthermore, the majority of business school faculty are too busy teaching and conducting research to consider the broader environment in which they work, and even if/when they do so, their ability to change it is severely constrained. Consequently, the authors suggest that the likelihood of profound change or reform in contemporary management education, at least in the United States, seems limited.

A useful exemplification of the difficulties, and how these difficulties can be overcome, in implementing KM in business school curriculums is a case study of Kent State University conducted by Bedford (2013a). Kent State University established the Information Architecture and Knowledge Management Master's programme in 2001, a unique programme in that it was founded on recognition of the difference between knowledge and information, and was intended to be non-sector specific and cross-areas of practice. Providing a good grounding for an academic programme, as well as stability in a dynamic and evolving discipline, the KM concentration was designed around some basic assumptions about KM as a professional discipline. These assumptions are as follows;

- KM is interdisciplinary – a strong academic programme must draw expertise in many disciplines;
- students must learn practice as well as theory;
- faculty with academic credentials in knowledge management are scare as it is an emerging field;
- KM is grounded in practice – this has implications for the traditional faculty model;

- collaboration between public sector, business and academia is critical to advancing the discipline; knowledge is different from information; knowledge is a universal concept which pertains to, and touches everyone in all aspects of life.

Thus, the diversity of the field of KM represents many challenges for KM educators and professionals (Rehman *et al*., 2013). However, the literature relating to KM as an academic discipline is scarce (Grossman, 2007). The earliest work of this nature found that the KM body of practice was barely represented in university courses (Ruth *et al*., 1999). Examples of other work includes that of Grossman (2007), who conducted a literature review and examination of IS curriculum models to determine how KM related courses are being integrated into academia. It was found that KM was not considered appropriate as an integral component of undergraduate IS curriculum, but rather is more prevalent in optional courses or those covering advanced topics, and integrated into the curriculum at graduate level. However, there has been a marked increase in KM doctoral dissertations since 1998. Grossman (2007) conducted a search on the database 'Dissertations and Theses' and, notably, the results suggest that although KM is being researched across the globe, the UK only contributed 2 out of 327 (0.6%) of the KM dissertations produced from 1981-2004. KM was found to be addressed by a range of disciplines, predominantly by business and management research, but also education, engineering, public affairs and community service, health sciences, family and consumer science, to name a few. This provides a further demonstration of the multidisciplinary nature of the subject.

Rehman and Sumait (2010) conducted an analysis of 13 KM curriculums, finding that KM programmes have several degree titles in several areas, although they suggest there is a need for academics and experts in the field to further validate these results in subsequent research. More recently, Bedford (2013b) conducted open surveys and found that, while there is notable maturity

in KM curriculum design, the nature and coverage of research programmes, faculty credentials and status, academic programme administration and programme goals are immature.

The following section will provide a snapshot of how the top business schools in the UK are teaching KM in 2015. This paper will converse with the literature on KM teaching by illustrating the emphasis and attention KM currently receives in the education programmes of top British business schools.

KM IN UK BUSINESS SCHOOLS: A SNAPSHOT OF 2015

Since the 1990s, British business schools have been carrying out research on KM[6]: all researched websites reviewed for this study indicate some ongoing research. For example, all universities showcase at least one professor with a research interest in KM. However, while valued as a topic of enquiry, KM does not receive equal attention in taught courses, at least not explicitly. This study made it evident that KM is not a big buzzword in business school taught programmes. Indicatively, the quantitative portion of this study did not result as useful if simply comparing universities' focus on KM as a taught topic. Among the surveyed business schools, only a very few universities offer modules, courses, or programmes explicitly titled 'knowledge management' (see Table 4 for full results of the top 40 business schools in the UK).

Table 4: Top 40 Business Schools in the UK Teaching of Knowledge Management

Business School	KM Path	Major In KM	Minor in KM	Specific Course	One Course Required	Total
London Business School		1	0	0	1	0	2
University of Oxford, Said Business School		0	0	0	1	0	1
University of Warwick Business School		0	0	0	0	0	0
London School of Economics and Political Science		0	0	0	0	0	0
University of Cambridge, Judge Business School		0	0	0	0	0	0

University of Cranfield School of Management	0	1	0	1	1	3
University of Manchester Business School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aston University Business School	0	0	0	1	0	1
Imperial College London, Tanaka Business School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lancaster University, Management School	0	1	0	1	1	3
University of Edinburgh, Business School	0	0	0	0	0	0
University of Strathclyde Business School	0	0	0	1	1	2
Ashridge Business School	0	0	0	0	0	0
University of Nottingham, Business School	0	0	0	0	0	0
City University, Cass Business School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Durham University, Business School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Henley Business School	0	0	0	0	0	0
University of Leeds Business School	0	1	0	0	0	1
University of Bath, School of Management	0	0	0	1	1	2
University of Glasgow, Adam Smith Business School	0	0	0	1	0	1
University of Birmingham Business School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bradford University, School of Management	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nottingham Trent University Business School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oxford Brookes University, Business School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newcastle University, Business School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cardiff University Business School	0	0	0	0	0	0
University of Exeter, Business School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Open University, Business School	0	0	0	0	0	0
University of St Andrews, School of Management	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sheffield Hallam University Business School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Edinburgh Napier University Business School	0	0	0	0	0	0
University of Hull, Business School	0	0	0	1	0	1
Manchester Metropolitan University, Business School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kingston University London Business School	0	0	0	1	1	2
University of Surrey Business School	0	0	0	1	1	2
Brunel University Business School	0	0	0	1	1	2
Northumbria University, Newcastle Business School	0	0	0	1	1	2
Loughborough University, Business School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Middlesex University, Business School	0	0	0	1	0	1
Coventry University Business School	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Researcher Field Data

Based on the above indicators, each school is given a score 0 to 5: 0 representing no focus on KM, 5 indicating the school is actively integrating KM in their teaching.

A closer look at Table 4, however, indicates that KM features as a subtopic of various courses. While KM, as a buzz term, is not readily found as an undergraduate or postgraduate course or module, what this online-based review does indicate is a number of different titles where KM is either heavily implied or mentioned.

Table 5: KM as a topic of various courses taught in UK Business Schools

University Name	Comments
London Business School	MBA has a knowledge management pathway: http://www.lsbf.org.uk/programmes/postgraduate/management/global-mba/knowledge-management
University Of Oxford Said Business School	Offered in distance learning: Applying Knowledge Management: Principles and Practices **Continuing Education
University Of Warwick Warwick Business School	http://www.wbs.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/information-systems-management/details/, http://www.wbs.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/information-systems-management-innovation/; Journal of Knowledge Management, Warwick Business School Knowledge and Innovation Network, research unit: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/wbs/research/ikon/people/
LSE - London School of Economics And Political Science	Department of Information Systems, MSc Management, Information Systems and Digital Innovation; *stream in Management department for Information Systems and Innovation
University Of Cambridge Judge Business School	knowledge management is one module within an org behaviour required course in the MPhil in Management, a few professors with an interest in knowledge management, knowledge exchange
Cranfield School of Management	Research center: Transforming Knowledge into Action Transforming Knowledge into Action; Lecturer with research interest in KM: http://www.som.cranfield.ac.uk/som/p11823/People/Faculty/Visiting-Fellows/David-Baxter, http://www.cranfield.ac.uk/courses/masters/knowledge-management-for-innovation.html
The University of Manchester - Manchester Business School	http://www.manchester.ac.uk/study/masters/courses/list/08345/acs-data-and-knowledge-management-msc/; There are elements of some of the BSc (Hons) Information Technology Management for Business and MSc Innovation Management and Entrepreneurship that seem to make reference to KM; also KM in Civil society referenced within the Manchester Institute of Innovation Research and Centre for Development Informatics
Aston University Aston Business School	Engineering and Applied Sciences; http://www.aston.ac.uk/aston-business-school/staff/academic/operations-information-management-group-members/prof-john-edwards/
Lancaster University Management School	MSc Human Resources and Knowledge Management + MSc IT, Management and Org Change; PhD cluster of interest: HRM, knowledge work and globalisation
University Of Edinburgh Business School	KM and Data
University of Strathclyde Strathclyde Business School	MSc/PgDip Information Management (Science Faculty) + BA Business Analysis & Technology & Human Resource Management; A lecturer/researcher in KM
Ashridge Business School	KM under Masters programmes: MBA, Ashridge Masters in Executive Coaching, Ashridge Masters in Organisational Change
City University Cass Business School	Faculty of Management has Information and Knowledge Management as one of its 13 research areas
Durham University Business School	B.As and researchers looking at KM
Henley Business School	Information Systems MSc and a few BA in Management that make mention to information management

University Of Leeds Leeds University Business School	Not referred to as KM but Information Management.
University Of Bath School Of Management	http://www.bath.ac.uk/management/msc-HRM-consulting/ Optional course in KM within the MBA
University of Birmingham Birmingham Business School	does research on knowledge management among many other areas
Bradford University School Of Management	Information Management compulsory and optional courses within undergraduate and post-taught programmes + MBA; researchers/professors with an interest in KM
Nottingham Trent University Nottingham Business School	No course solely on KM but KM part of a compulsory managing, people, information knowledge module, researchers on KM
Oxford Brookes University Business School	No course but elements of KM worked into other modules such as information management and Management of Knowledge in a completive market; researcher on KM
University Of Exeter Business School	IT management masters not explicit on KM; KM and IT management do appear as optional modules for BA`s in Management
Open University Business School	Research on: Knowledge management in design and innovation networks
University of St. Andrews School of Management	MSc in Management and Computer Technologies
Sheffield Hallam University - Sheffield Business School	The Hallam Centre for Community Justice
Edinburgh Napier Business School	researchers with an interest in KM
University of Hull Business School	Optional course on Managing Knowledge in the MBA
Manchester Metropolitan University Business School	There is a knowledge management cluster
Kingston Business School - Kingston University London	Course on Knowledge Management and Organisational Learning. in the Human Resource Management MSc;
Brunel University Brunel Business School	MSc Information Systems : + Optional course in Innovation and Knowledge Management as part of the BSc Business Management; Required course on KM in the MSc Human Resources Management
Northumbria University Newcastle Business School	MSC Business Information System Management,
Middlesex University Business School	MSc Business Information Systems Management: http://www.mdx.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/business-information-systems-management
University of South Wales	Offer a number of courses under KM subject area, both UG and PG levels
Aberdeen Business School - Robert Gordon University	Various modules in KM at both UG and PG levels

Bangor Business School, University of Wales	No courses in Knowledge Management, but a module in a couple of PG: LAW & Mgmt. MBA + Mgmt. and Finance MSc
University of Bedfordshire Business School	Can be tailored-designed
University of Bristol, Department of Management	Research papers only
Brunel Business School, Brunel University London	Modules in KM & Innovation at both UG and PG levels.
Canterbury Christchurch University, The Business School	What is the focus of this topic? Have you seen a link or this course advertised somewhere? We do not have a KM program but we may have something similar under a different title.
Cranfield School of Management	KM for innovation MSc
University of Leicester School of Management	No standalone courses on KM but KM modules
Norwich Business School, University of East Anglia, School of Management	PG course in Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining
Queen Mary University London	MSc Management and Organisational Innovation, one modules on Knowledge and Innovation Management
Salford Business School	No KM course but Business Management courses may have an element of KM
School of Management and Business - The University of Wales, Aberystwyth	MSc Enterprise and Innovation Management
School of Management - Southampton University	MSc Knowledge and Information Systems Management with KM and Business Intelligence module. Option KM modules as part of the BSc Business Entrepreneurship, BSc Business Innovation and BSc Business History programmes
The York Management School	No specific degree programme specifically specialising in KM but module elements within 2nd year UG.

Source: Researcher Field Data

The comments were collected from the websites of leading UK Business Schools (101) with more detailed analysis and attention placed on the top 40 Business Schools according to Eduniversal's Business Schools Ranking in the United Kingdom (Eduniversal, 2014). Moreover, we contacted all business schools, and admission offices in all universities with recognised business schools, via email and telephone to collect more information and data about the understanding and teaching of KM within Business Schools in the UK. The study focused on enquiring how each school includes KM teaching in its programmes and curriculums by analysing how KM is integrated within the business school's curriculums and teaching plans.

The first title that could be argued as synonymous for Knowledge Management is *Information Systems Management:* even this term comes in a variety of forms. Yet at their essence, business schools are providing considerable attention to teaching how technologies are utilized to manage the flow of information within organizations. The stress of such courses is on technological innovation. For example, the LSE's MSc in Management of Information Systems and Digital Innovation focuses on interdisciplinary approaches linking information systems with "emerging domains of digital innovation, such as cloud computing, social networking, and mobile technologies".[7]

Certainly, the association of KM with information technology is very common. Of the few schools making a more explicit link between IT and KM is the Oxford Business School. Here the school has begun to offer a short course labelled KM in the Department for Continuing Education. The course is designed to help organizations 'know what they know' so that "organizations can bring together and make accessible all the skills and knowledge and apply them to increase operational and individual performance". Undoubtedly the centrality of new technologies and the main modules proposed are specialized and technical.

Connecting these observations to the earlier discussion on KM theories, universities appear to have a limited conception of KM as predominantly IT-based. This means that KM is given more emphasis in engineering and computer science schools, rather than in business schools. For example, the University of Manchester offers an MSc in Data and Knowledge Management. It covers "principles, algorithms, and technologies underlying machine learning, probabilistic modelling, and optimisation, while exposing students to relevant applications". The programme is offered by the School of Computer Science, requiring a "First or Upper Second class honours degree in computer science, or in a joint degree with at least 50% computer science content"[8].

While information technology is definitely relevant, important and ‘trendy’ given the speed of new information technologies, this approach might leave out the human dimension of KM.

Beyond the focus on technology, to a lesser extent KM features in courses focusing on Human Resource Management and discussing Organizational Learning. For example, Kingston University offers a module on Knowledge Management and Organisational Learning as an option in its MSc in Human Resource Management. Nottingham University Business School offers an MSc in Management Psychology where Organizational Learning is a compulsory module. The Judge Business School at the University of Cambridge, for example offers a course in Organizational Behaviour. The course description acknowledges the topic is very broad and mentions covering a range of topics, including learning and knowledge management[9]. Compared to the technical ‘information systems’ modules, ‘Organizational Learning’ tends to discuss KM issues from a more strategic, human-centred perspective.

Among the Universities that are defining KM more holistically, Lancaster University Management School is promoting the teaching of KM in what seems to be the most integrated and extended way. The school offers the following courses: BSc Management and Information Technology, MSc Human Resources and Knowledge Management, and MSc Information Technology, Management & Organisational Change.

The MSc Human Resources and Knowledge Management based at the Department of Organisation, Work and Technology, stands out as particularly innovative. The course is designed for applicants “from various disciplines building management careers or practitioners seeking deeper understanding of HR and knowledge management”. The course explicitly identifies human

resource management and knowledge management as "crucial aspects of competitive advantage in the global economy in all organisations".

The course proposes four core modules: Human Resource Management (two courses); Knowledge Management (two courses); the management of change and new organisational structures in the 21st Century (two courses); and the production of managerial knowledge (two and a half courses). The two KM modules set forward to "present to students some of the ideas and practices that lie below the label Knowledge Management", including elements of: management education as a global "knowledge industry"; intellectual rights and the global management of intellectual capital; knowledge management in the "database era"; and knowledge management as a globalizing phenomenon.

The programme endorses a more inclusive philosophy around KM. It is designed to "bring out an appreciation of the need for innovative thinking in all areas but especially in understanding organisational theory and its application to contemporary technical and organisational change". Finally, it puts emphasis on developing students' ability to think critically in order to "deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences".

Among the few other programmes with a specific and direct reference to KM, is the University of Cranfield's Knowledge Management for Innovation (MSc/MTech/PgDip/PgCert). This programme seems to offer an holistic approach to KM including a focus on "people management and innovation through data management techniques and business process planning". The

programme is particularly interesting because it maintains a strong focus on technology, while providing insight on KM's implication on strategic and system thinking.

While outside of the 'top 40' business school ranking, the University of Brighton offers a very unique MBA called: The Knowledge and Innovation Management MBA.[10] The programme suggests a vision to merge innovation with strategic KM and decision-making. The MBA is said to emphasize "on analysis, creativity and innovation as tools to identify problems, offer solutions and to explore and exploit opportunities"; it is set to prepare students to "lead and combine" innovation and KM strategies.

Among the universities that carry out interesting research on KM topics, the School of Management at the University of Bath sticks out as having particularly KM focused faculty. The School's research cluster on "Organisation: Work, Leadership and Change"[11] focuses on interdisciplinary and interfaculty research and involves researchers with backgrounds in "organizational studies, human resource management, strategy and social psychology". Among the theme of researchers, Professor Juani Swart holds a PhD in Knowledge Management and teaches a course on Human Capital Management, which involves a strong emphasis on KM. She brings in a background in Psychology and has published on knowledge intensive firms and systems approaches to KM as well as on network influences on strategic choices.[12]

In summary, even though KM as a buzzword has not been widely adopted by business schools, some aspects of its essence seem to be omnipresent in other compulsory modules. Modules ranging from organizational behaviour to human resources management to the more obvious information systems management made reference to KM ideas. Although KM's inconspicuous transversal application should be reassuring, it is doubtful that those students taking up the modules realize

that these themes are linked to the discourse of KM. What this means is that KM can quite easily slip under the radar for the entirety of a business undergraduate or post-taught degree: where KM modules are offered, they are generally optional. In the same arena, KM is competing with other modules with bigger buzzwords that have held a longer residency in business schools.

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

This study connected key KM debates to a review of the teaching of KM among business schools in the UK, with more emphasis on the top 40. Through a review of each school's website, it attempted to answer the question: **How do the top 40 business schools in the UK understand and implement KM in their teaching?**

The findings of the study are twofold. On the one side, it appears that KM is not a big buzzword in business schools' curriculums, while it remains an important topic of inquiry. The review indicates that only a very small percentage of business schools have designed specific courses or modules around KM. This being said, this study explains these findings by suggesting that the teaching of KM is currently emphasized more in relation to information technology, and therefore its teaching falls more directly within engineering and computer science schools.

Connecting these findings to key KM literature, the study suggests that business schools interested in developing courses in KM should focus on providing a more balanced and holistic approach to KM teaching. Knowledge Management is a growing, dynamic, and crucial dimension of management in modern economies. With the booming of new information technologies, organizations are left to manage big data. This means that knowledge will always be in surplus in any modern organization; the key task for managers is figuring out how much information should

be made available, what kind and why. Business schools can be more explicit in gearing students to incorporate a KM lens to understanding and managing organizations.

KM needs to go beyond information systems management

Information Systems Management is often used as a synonym for KM. However, as close a fit as information system might seem, the courses only focus on one aspect of KM. The Masters in Human Resources and Knowledge Management at Lancaster for example would argue, "the field of KM is wide and complex and often to the surprise of some, usually defined and constrained by the social and organisational aspects, rather than the technical". In the context of business schools, KM programmes should not focus exclusively on the technological aspect of managing knowledge. Instead, they should also try to understand what kind of knowledge is important to an organization, how to act as a manager in the situations where specific knowledge is lacking, and how KM can be utilized to maximize human resource management. Information systems might help organize knowledge, but business schools could take more leadership on preparing students to manage such knowledge effectively and creatively. Knowledge will always be a surplus in any organization, so the key is figuring out how much information should be made available, what kind and why. Business schools should prepare students to make more sophisticated and critical decisions around KM issues.

Practice with real life examples

As the literature suggests, the practice of KM is extremely complex: the dimension of KM spills over in organizational behaviour, change management and organizational culture. To make the study of KM practical, it would be worth exploring such complexities with real life case studies. For example, the MSc Knowledge Management for Innovation at Cranfield University includes in

its course programme an industrially sponsored consultancy style group project. The projects are oriented towards the industry and receive support from leading external organizations. With a closer focus on case studies and research, the MSc in HR and Knowledge Management at Lancaster University requires students to do a dissertation in the form of an organizational research project. The research projects explore KM practices in depth using real case studies, and connecting to theoretical frameworks around KM. More interestingly, the University of Brighton Knowledge and Innovation Management MBA requires students to undertake a comprehensive project of strategic importance to their organization. The design and interpretation of the project should draw on a sound knowledge of strategic, change and innovation management disciplines. According to the programme, the project will equip students with the knowledge and skills to initiate and lead new developments, be capable of comprehending and integrating cross-functional and sectoral issues while drawing on sound judgement, personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable environments.

Make it interdisciplinary

As this paper suggests, the teaching of KM in British universities and business schools emphasizes the technological aspects of KM, such as Information Systems, while undermining the complexity of KM processes. Fusing the technological aspect of KM with insights coming from other disciplines could introduce new nuances and innovation in the field. Business schools should not fear involving other disciplines in the process of teaching and researching KM: sociology, psychology and organizational studies are among the most obvious perspectives KM teaching could incorporate. The research cluster on ‘Organization: Work, Leadership and Change’ at the University of Bath proposes an interesting approach to interdisciplinary research.

A few facts become clear when searching for the presence of KM within the top business schools in the UK. The first most important fact is that KM has yet to carve a self-standing place for itself within taught programmes. Framing KM discourse within relevant academic literature, this paper outlines that, while KM is being scrutinized as a research topic, interest in KM has yet to be translated into a widespread integration of KM as a taught skill within business schools.

While KM is not widely studied directly or explicitly, this paper stresses that different aspects of KM are transversally part of business schools' programmes. In particular, KM is integrated most strongly with Information Systems Management and, to a lesser extent, within Organizational Learning and Behaviour. The paper suggests that it might be reductionist, and a missed opportunity, to limit studies of KM to technological fields and hopes to start a conversation on how KM can be integrated more holistically and effectively into business schools' curriculums.

STUDY'S LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study represents an initial exploration of KM teaching in business schools. By reviewing the websites of the top 40 business schools in the UK, this paper highlighted that KM is not in the spotlight of business school's curriculums. However, the information collected through the methodology utilized here is not sufficient to make broader generalizations about *how* business schools teach KM, or how they are discussing and framing KM issues within other elements of their curriculums. This section will highlight the limitation of the study and provide suggestions for further research.

Study Significance and Limitations:

This exploratory study utilized exclusively desk research. Through an in-depth review of the material that business schools provide on their websites, the study can conclude that the term 'Knowledge Management' is not leveraged by business schools as a key dimension of their offering to students. Basically, the study provides relevant insights into how the term 'knowledge management' features within business schools. This is to say, assuming that websites are a business school's 'face' and the main platforms through which prospective students interact with the School, the study shows how KM is emphasized and prioritized among the top British business schools.

Even so, the study has clear limitations. The research conducted does not help to determine the quality of KM teaching, and it offers inadequate data to understand how business schools unpack KM and transversally integrate it within their programmes. In fact, the study's methodological design can explore the relevance of KM as a term, but it can only provide limited perspective into how this complex and multidimensional concept is operationalized in business schools' curriculums. For example, in the cases where no courses or modules on KM are available, how do general modules on management, leadership or organizational behaviours discuss and understand KM processes? Do professors present KM as a technical issue? Do they link its relevance to other management dimensions such as culture, organizational learning, and strategic management? In short, the capacity of business schools to frame KM holistically is beyond the scope of this research. Moreover, in its inability to discard the possibility that KM topics could be integrated as transversal to Schools' curriculums, this study is not sufficient to address the quality of KM teaching.

Suggestions for further research:

As stressed above, in order to further understand how Schools are conceptualizing KM, it would be valuable to carry out more in-depth studies. Here are three different stakeholders that could be interviewed to enrich the preliminary observations provided by this study:

- **Studying KM Management from the perspective of businesses:**

  With the assumptions that one business school objective is to support organizations and institutions by preparing students to contribute to their innovation and effectiveness, the perspective of businesses would add valuable insight to the issue of KM teaching in business schools. For example, it would be interesting to understand how students that have been prepared by Schools that do focus on KM in their teaching have leveraged the students' preparation. Questions such as the following would be particularly relevant:

  - How do businesses understand the role of KM in their managerial processes?;
  - How do businesses teach KM to their employees?;
  - How do businesses conceptualize KM?;
  - Are businesses looking to hire students trained in KM? If so, what skills are involved in KM training?

- **Interviewing professors and researchers:**

  To enrich the results of this study, it would be valuable to supplement the desk research with in-depth interviews with business schools' professors and researchers. Further research could explore internal debates around the teaching of KM, and the efforts that are being made to integrate KM in curriculums. It would also be valuable to access syllabus and course materials within courses, such as information systems and organizational behaviours, to understand how business schools are going about discussing KM in related courses.

- **Interviewing students on their experience with KM teaching:**

  Finally, the student perspective on this issue would be particularly interesting. Do students value KM teaching? Are they aware of the relevance of KM in modern businesses? These questions would further provide insights into whether there is a market for KM teaching at business schools. In addition, it would be interesting to interview students after graduation from business schools. Did they find their preparation adequate to cope with KM systems? Are there aspects of KM they wished they had studied more in-depth?

Finally, what is surprising is that the UK, although one of the most prevalent countries in the economy, seems to be particularly lagging behind in the implementation of KM into education. However, many of the studies conducted that aim to explore the implementation of KM in academia are quite old, and may not be representative of the current state of affairs when considering that KM is a field with rapid growth and progression. As noted by Bedford (2013b), it is important to track the progress of KM towards a mature academic discipline. Accordingly, the current study investigates the implementation of KM into academia in the top 40 business schools in the UK.

The hope of this paper is to start a broader conversation around business schools' capacity to prepare students to effectively manage complex KM systems and processes; a more diverse mix of methodologies, and the perspectives of different stakeholders could go an extra mile into understanding business schools' efforts in preparing students for the knowledge economy.

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ENDNOTES

[1] Eduniversal (2014). "Business Schools Ranking in the United Kingdom", from http://www.eduniversal-ranking.com/business-school-university-ranking-in-united-kingdom.html.

[2] HESA collects a range of data every year UK-wide from universities, higher education colleges and other differently funded providers of higher education. This data is then provided to UK governments and higher education funding bodies to support their work in regulating and funding higher education providers. In addition information derived from the data is published as official statistics and in many accessible formats for use by a wide range of organisations and individuals for a variety of purposes, including HE providers, academic researchers, students, prospective students, private companies, professional bodies and the press and media.

[3] The Joint Academic Coding System (JACS) is the system used by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) in the United Kingdom to classify academic subjects. A JACS code for a single subject consists of a letter and three numbers.

[4] Louise Shaxson is a senior Research Fellow at ODI. She has contributed to several ground-breaking publications including the K* concept paper, and *Knowledge, Policy and Power in International Development: A Practical Guide* (The Policy Press).

[5] Dr Alex Bielak is an internationally recognized Knowledge Translation and Brokering authority who has developed the K* (KStar) concept, bringing together experts in the field from different sectors world-wide for the first time. He also serves as a Senior Research Fellow and Knowledge Broker with the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health in Canada.

[6] For more information on KM research in British Business Schools, consult 'Investigating Knowledge Management' (2000).

[7] More information on the London School of Economics' MSc Management of Information Systems and Digital Innovation (MISDI) is available here: http://www.lse.ac.uk/study/graduate/taughtProgrammes2015/MScManagementInformationSystemsAndDigitalInnovation.aspx

[8] For more on the MSc in Data and Knowledge Management at Manchester University, please see: http://www.manchester.ac.uk/study/masters/courses/list/08345/acs-data-and-knowledge-management-msc/

[9] More on the MPhil in Management at the Judge Business School here: http://www.jbs.cam.ac.uk/programmes/professional-practice-mphils-diplomas/mphil-management/programme-overview/core-courses/

[10] More on the MBA at Brighton University here: https://www.brighton.ac.uk/courses/study/knowledge-and-innovation-management-mba-pgcert-pgdip.aspx

[11] More on the research cluster here: http://www.bath.ac.uk/management/research/clusters/cluster-organise.html

[12] More on Professor Juani Swart can be found here: http://www.bath.ac.uk/management/faculty/juani_swart.html